

AN *Apology*
APOLOGY
with the Compliments
FOR THE *of the Author.*

DISUSE OF ALCOHOLIC DRINKS,

In a Letter to a Friend.

BY

THE REV. G. B. MACDONALD,

WESLEYAN MINISTER.

Second Thousand.

LONDON :

JOHN MASON, 66, & PASCO, 12, PATERNOSTER-ROW ;

PEART AND SON, BIRMINGHAM ; LOMAS, BRISTOL ; WAREING WEBB,

LIVERPOOL ; H. W. WALKER, LEEDS ; SAXTON, SHEFFIELD ;

AND ALL OTHER BOOKSELLERS.

1841.

a

WILLIAM TYLER,
PRINTER,
BOLT COURT, LONDON.

AN APOLOGY,

&c.

MY DEAR SIR,

Birmingham, January 25th, 1841.

You will remember that my refusal to comply with your request to drink wine with you, led to a conversation on the subject of entire abstinence from alcoholic drinks. Many of the reasons which I stated for the change which has taken place in my opinions and practice, appeared novel and startling to you ; but I perceived that the *facts* which I adduced, considerably impressed your mind. The position in which I have voluntarily placed myself, in opposition to the usages of society generally and the long-established habits of my own friends, I assure you, has not been assumed without serious thought and diligent examination, and the complete satisfaction of my own mind as to the propriety of the decision which I have formed. The conviction which I entertain of the immense importance of this subject, has made me resolve to give you, at much greater length and with more minuteness of detail than a conversation would allow, an account of the process, so far as I can recollect it, by which my own mind has been led to conclusions, as satisfactory on the question of total abstinence from intoxicating drinks, as any demonstration in mathematics has ever appeared to me. This distinct statement at the commencement of my letter, must be regarded as my apology, if I should appear to you to be too positive, or even a little dogmatical. I write as though truth with its sunbeam light was shining on my mind. I am in earnest, and you can scarcely expect me to be unimpassioned.

Permit me to say, that I receive with perfect confidence of their truth, the repeated declarations which I have heard you make, of your abhorrence of intemperance. I know your private habits sufficiently well, to be certain that your own practice agrees with this judgment. The use which you make of alcoholic drinks is infrequent and very limited ; and yet if the conclusion to which I have come be correct, very important results would be consequent on your entire abandonment of all that

can intoxicate, as a *beverage*. I make no pretensions to extensive and accurate medical knowledge; and do not profess to interfere with the duty of the physician. My remarks apply to persons in a state of health making use of alcoholic drinks as beverage. This is certain, that the most judicious and talented medical men regard alcohol as a most powerful and dangerous agent—to be employed only with advantage under some very few and peculiar circumstances, and then, most cautiously and sparingly. The apology which we have both heard many times that persons take these liquors by advice as *medicine*, is confirmatory of my views. They cannot be both medicine and beverage. I was amused with the reply given by an American gentleman on the deck of a steam-packet, to an apologist for intoxicating drinks. In the course of the discussion between them, the supporter of entire abstinence appealed powerfully to the conscience of his opponent. “My dear sir,” said he, “it is cruel of you.” “What is cruel of me?” was the reply. “What thus to press me, when my physician has told me that I must drink it or die.” “My dear sir,” rejoined the abstinence advocate, “why did you not tell me at the beginning that you were an *invalid*; and why have you been, for this half hour, endeavouring to persuade all these people around you *to take your medicine?*” I affirm it deliberately, that whoever professes to drink alcohol as a medicine, renounces it as a beverage. One thing has much surprised me, that so few medical men have carried out their *premises*—their judgment of the nature and properties of alcohol—to the legitimate and obvious conclusion. If it be what they have affirmed it is, a *poison*—the nature of a diffusible stimulant, acting injuriously on man by disordering the nervous system—exciting the brain and quickening the pulse—and when taken to a certain extent, destroying life; then is it their duty, as conservators of the public health, to disabuse men’s minds of the popular error that some really beneficial result follows its ordinary use; and at least to protest against alcoholic drinks, as a beverage. *Prussic acid* destroys life by *lowering* the nervous system—in a sense it is the opposite poison to alcohol, and, for obvious reasons, it is prescribed with caution. The minute instructions given as to the quantity to be taken, are connected with the emphatic and largely printed warning “*poison*” on the phial. Sir Astley Cooper is of opinion that a similar notice should be given of ardent spirits.

My attention was first directed to this subject in the year 1834. A Select Committee of the House of Commons was appointed that year, “to inquire into the extent, causes, and

consequences of the prevailing vice of intoxication among the labouring classes of the united kingdom, in order to ascertain whether any legislative measures can be devised to prevent the further spread of so great a national evil." I read very carefully all the evidence which was given before this Committee, and the facts stated were perfectly appalling. I was utterly unprepared for the statements made, as to the extent to which ardent spirits are drunk in this country. The consumption in the year 1832 was *twenty-five millions, nine hundred and eighty-two thousand, four hundred and ninety-four* gallons; this amount of course does not include the large quantity obtained from illicit distillation and smuggling. The strongest evidence was adduced, that the physical and moral evils consequent upon drinking ardent spirits, are tremendous and invariable. Leaving out of sight the destructive consequences to national welfare which result from this habit—and they are many and great—I was most powerfully impressed with the prodigious amount of evil which is inflicted on *individual character*. The Select Committee in presenting their report, give the following, as "*only a few of the evils*" directly springing from this baneful source.

1. "Destruction of health; disease in every form and shape; premature decrepitude in the old; stunted growth and general debility and decay in the young; loss of life by paroxysms, apoplexies, drownings, burnings, and accidents of various kinds; *delirium tremens*, one of the most awful inflictions of humanity; paralysis, idiotcy, madness, and violent death, as proved by numerous medical witnesses, who have made this the subject of their long and careful investigation.

2. "Destruction of mental capacity and vigour, and extinction of aptitude for learning, as well as of disposition for practising any useful art or industrious occupation.

3. "Irritation of all the worst passions of the heart; hatred, anger, revenge; with a brutalization of disposition that breaks asunder and destroys the most endearing bonds of nature and society.

4. "Extinction of all moral and religious principle; disregard of truth, indifference to education, violation of chastity, insensibility to shame, and indescribable degradation; as proved by clergymen, magistrates, overseers, teachers, and others, examined by your Committee on all these points."

I was led from an acquaintance with these facts to inquire, what are the real nature and properties of this most powerful and mischievous agent—alcohol? Will you believe me, that, although accustomed to see ardent spirits from my youth, and to

drink them occasionally, diluted with water, I had never examined—may I say philosophically?—what they were, and by what means they acted on man, physically, mentally, and morally. I will give you very briefly the result of my investigation.

Saccharine matter is allowed by all scientific chemists to be the base of alcoholic drinks. But sugar alone is not sufficient to the production of alcohol; there must be a portion of gluten or yeast mixed with the sweet solution, or else the peculiar fermentation called *vinous*, cannot take place. In most fruits, in grapes and apples, this *gluten* is found in certain proportion. *Vinous fermentation* produces the intoxicating power which in greater or less quantities is always found, where this change has taken place; and this spirit is called—alcohol. Modern science has ascertained that it is composed of hydrogen, carbon, and oxygen, in the proportion of 13·04, 52·17, and 34·79 parts to one hundred. The art of distillation is supposed to have been discovered by an Arabian alchymist in the ninth century. Fermentation must precede distillation, or there would be no alcohol in existence. By the application of heat, the distiller obtains spirits of wine, or pure alcohol. In wines and beer a portion of the grape and malt is held in solution; but in ardent spirits there is nothing but the alcohol and water, differently flavoured according to the substance from which the spirit has been extracted.

For several centuries distilled spirit was employed exclusively in those mysterious experiments in which the alchymists engaged, in search of a universal solvent, by which to extract gold from its supposed hidden recesses in all minerals, and indeed in all substances. In the sixteenth century, a Spanish physician first suggested its use as a remedy in disease; and for some time it was measured out with all the skill necessary in compounding the medicine of the apothecary. Unhappily for the world, it soon afterwards escaped from such guardianship, and millions of men have adopted it as their favorite beverage.

Having ascertained what alcohol is, I was anxious to know what are its properties and effects? One thing struck me most forcibly, that *there cannot be a single particle of nourishment in it*. The great object at which the distiller aims, is to obtain a pure spirit—to destroy every thing which constitutes the substance contained in the alembic or retort, in order to obtain the greatest possible quantity of alcohol from it. The most careful examination of which I have been capable, has brought me to this conclusion—that the distilled spirit, alcohol, is a *poison*. I am prepared for the smile of incredulity which I suspect will play on your face, as you read this opinion, and remember how many

times you and your friends have partaken of spirits and water. Sir Astley Cooper has declared that "spirits and poisons are synonymous terms." The evidence which Dr. Farre gave before the Committee of the House of Commons, will explain and illustrate this opinion. The following question was distinctly put to him. "Spirits have sometimes been called a poison; are they correctly so termed?" The reply deserves special consideration:—"They are called a poison, because they destroy life: but if they be spoken of in the medical sense of poisoning, they kill, not by a poisonous property, but by the destruction of the balance of circulation—by excitement or subsequent collapse, or the disorganization resulting on the reaction therefrom."

Dr. Mussey, an American physician, in his Prize Essay, says, "What is poison? It is that substance, in whatever form it may be, which, when applied to a living surface, whether external or internal, disconcerts life's healthy movements. It is altogether distinct from substances which are in their nature nutritious. It is not capable of being converted into food and of becoming part of the living organs. We all know that proper food is wrought into our bodies. The action of animal life occasions a constant waste, and new matter has to be taken in, which, after digestion, is carried into the blood. But poison is incapable of this. It may indeed be mixed with nutritious substances, but if it goes into the blood, it is thrown off as soon as the system can accomplish its deliverance, unless nature has been too far enfeebled by the influence of the poison. *Such a poison is alcohol—such in all its forms, mix it with what you may. It is never digested and converted into nourishment.*"

When these statements are disproved and the facts upon which they are based can no longer be found, then I may suspect some impropriety in the very strong but appropriate term *poison*, for alcohol. I have looked into this subject carefully, and have gleaned my knowledge from varied sources. I will refer you at the close of this letter to several works to which I have been indebted for information, and shall not therefore specify my particular obligations for sentiments or expressions.

I am not insensible of the apparent force of the matter-of-fact reply to the assertion that alcohol is poison—many drink it habitually, and yet survive. Very few persons, probably, are aware of the extent to which derangement and disease may proceed in them without producing suffering and death. It is certain that considerable inroads may be made upon the health long before any mischief is suspected. The fact is, that alcohol when introduced into the human system, at once induces an incipient morbid action, which remains too generally unnoticed

until it assumes an alarming and dangerous form. There are some constitutions which seem to be capable of resisting a much larger amount of stimulus than others ; but the physiology of man, and the nature of alcohol, prove that ardent spirits must injure the constitution in proportion to the frequency, quantity and quality imbibed.

The three principal functions on which animal life depends are the digestive, the circulating, and the nervous. I will candidly tell you, that I never investigated the organic economy of man, until I was induced to do so, by perceiving that an acquaintance with the laws of physiology, was necessary in order to master the philosophy of the temperance question. I find upon examination, that all the vital functions are most seriously affected by the introduction of alcohol into the system. The stomach suffers prodigiously. I will tell you what I have ascertained from men of science ; and although the information may have no novelty to you, I assure you that a recent acquaintance with the facts which I shall mention, has powerfully impressed my mind, inducing the vain regret that I had not obtained this knowledge twenty years ago. The stomach and the intestinal canal are lined with a very delicate and exquisitely sensitive membrane, which is said to be no thicker than gold leaf. In a healthy state, the immense number of minute blood vessels which ramify through every part of the stomach, can scarcely be discerned by the naked eye. But almost immediately after ardent spirits have been drunk, an amazing change takes place : the little vessels which were invisible, become so *turgid with blood* as not only to be prominent, but perceptible to the naked eye. The state that I have just referred to, prevents the proper secretion of gastric juice, and therefore interferes with the digestive process. I have observed that most spirit-drinkers complain of unpleasant nausea, and of acidity and excitability of the stomach. The authority to whom I am indebted for these statements says, that a course of regular *temperate drinking* (so called) of ardent spirits, will *destroy* the thin mucous membrane of the stomach, not by wearing it away, but by rendering it tougher and thicker, until at length all traces of its original tenuity of structure are entirely obliterated. I was much startled at this positive assertion—" *From this membrane being so constantly pickled in spirits, it sometimes becomes gradually changed into soft gristly substance, and even ultimately into cancerous disease.*"

I have heard frequent reference made by my medical friends to *the spirit-drinker's liver*. They assure me that in the diseased state produced by alcohol, there can be but a scanty se-

retion of bile ; a fluid which is essential to the performance of healthy digestion. Indeed, the repetition of alcoholic stimulus is known to produce *an alteration of structure*, frequently degenerating into chronic enlargement, into tubercle, or scirrhus. In such a state, or even in the earlier stages of it, I do not wonder that spirit-drinkers complain of the weight they feel on their right side, and the pain and tenderness consequent on pressure. Loss of appetite—loathing of food—acid eructations—dejection of spirits, we have all noticed as exhibited by those who regularly use alcoholic drinks.

I have taken some pains to understand the circulating and respiratory systems, and I feel certain that they are both seriously interfered with, when alcohol is introduced into the human body. The *heart*, that engine by which the vital current is principally maintained, and whence the blood is pumped, at every stroke, along the arteries to the different parts of the body, is peculiarly liable to morbid change, through the influence of alcoholic stimulus. The case appears to be this, that the natural stimulus to the contraction of this organ, is the pressure of the blood distending its cavities. Now, as ardent spirit when swallowed is absolutely taken up into the circulation, (for it does not combine with the chyle in providing fresh blood,) and brought into contact with the inner surface of the heart, there must of course be an additional stimulus directly applied to this organ ; and therefore its contractions will be at once more frequent and stronger than ordinary. The heart is not endowed with strength to sustain with impunity such undue labour ; and *sooner* or *later*, some serious, some fatal injury is inflicted upon the seat of life. How lamentably frequent *heart complaints* have become, and *sudden death* resulting from them ! And in how many instances may their origin be traced to frequent stimulation from alcohol !

But I find on research that the *most* injurious effect produced by alcohol, is on the *brain*. All spirit-drinkers, especially, are in a state of imminent and immediate danger. The blood-vessels in the head are overcharged and extended to the utmost of their capacity ; and the tender tubes are constantly in danger of bursting. *Apoplexy*, you know, is very common among such persons. One important fact has been ascertained by the Parliamentary Report on drunkenness, that spirit-drinking is a powerfully exciting cause of *insanity*. Out of four hundred and ninety-five patients that were admitted during a space of four years into a Lunatic Asylum in Liverpool, it was clearly proved that two hundred and fifty-seven had arrived at that

state by intemperance. In a report for the year 1839, of the West Riding of York Pauper Lunatic Asylum at Wakefield, "it appears that in six hundred and eighty-three male patients, three hundred and nine cases were attributable to drunkenness." Nor can this be a matter of surprise when it is recollected that by some recent investigations it has been clearly demonstrated that alcohol frequently finds its way into the brain itself. A valuable work on this subject, to which the Faculty of Medicine in the University of Edinburgh awarded the gold medal, has recently been published by Dr. Percy, of Birmingham. It is entitled, "An Experimental Inquiry concerning the presence of Alcohol in the Ventricles of the Brain, after poisoning by that liquid; together with Experiments illustrative of the action of Alcohol." Dr. Percy ascertained by numerous experiments the presence of alcohol in appreciable quantities, in the most vital parts of the system, as the brain and the blood. I think the evidence adduced in this treatise *proves* that *alcohol*, in all its essential characters, enters the *circulation*, and thus becomes intimately combined with the substance of the brain; a fact which easily accounts for the peculiar tendency of alcoholic drinks to induce derangement of the conditions and functions of this mental organ.

But I have observed in many instances, where no indications of insanity have appeared, that there has been an obvious, rapid, and premature failure in the mental faculties. The parties, from the force of habit, perhaps, have been able to transact the ordinary business which has occupied their time and attention for years; but on other subjects requiring thought, reflection, energy, and determination, they have manifested the most pitiable vacuity and imbecility of mind. I find many persons agree in the truth of these remarks, who never suspect the perilous circumstances in which their present habits are placing them, because, forsooth, they never drink drams—raw spirits! The idea is a popular one, but most erroneous, that by diluting ardent spirits with water, any imaginable evil properties in them are neutralized or destroyed. Dr. Farre was asked this question by the Committee of the House of Commons, "Does the addition of water merely effect any change in the property of distilled spirit?" His answer was, "*It does not. Diluted spirit destroys as effectually, although more slowly, than the undiluted spirit.*"

My remarks, hitherto, have referred almost exclusively to the physical evils consequent upon drinking alcohol; there are moral results most deplorable, which must be stated. The corruption of human nature is, for very significant reasons, designated in

Scripture by the emphatic term *flesh*; "that which is born of the flesh is flesh." "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." The evil principle in man is powerful, and the world in which we live, stimulates and developes it. The fact is indisputable, that the introduction of alcoholic drinks into the system, occasions, in many instances, the exhibition of turbulent passions, and arouses propensities which would otherwise be comparatively dormant. It is notorious that crimes the most disgusting and revolting to human nature, are ordinarily perpetrated under the stimulus of ardent spirits. But the mischievous effects of alcoholic drinks, in a moral point of view, may be felt at many degrees below the excesses of evil to which I have just referred. The great struggle of the Christian warfare is against "the law in the members;" a mighty achievement to be gained, is, "to keep under the body." Now the tendency of all alcoholic drink is, to operate on man's animal nature, to excite those feelings which *the flesh* is sufficiently predisposed to develope, and therefore to place in greater jeopardy our moral principles and purposes. Incitements to evil in some form or other, are produced necessarily by the application of alcoholic stimulus. I question not but they may be resisted and triumphed over by a child of God, through the grace which dwells in him. I submit, however, to your serious consideration, whether it be wise, or prudent, or right, *knowingly* to place ourselves in circumstances in which the Divine help has to be specially afforded to keep us from falling into some flagrant sin? Are we not under a moral obligation "to avoid the appearance of evil," and not to "enter into temptation?" I have already said, that alcoholic stimulants excite all that is earthly and animal in human nature; and I do not think that we are warranted in expecting the grace of God to prevent the physical influence of intoxicating drink, any more than to prevent a man from feeling the effects of fire, if he should choose to thrust his hand into a furnace. The Scriptural injunctions against "fleshly lusts" are numerous. Now, there is one conviction which presses itself upon every reflecting mind, as arising from the most obvious principles of justice and truth, that when a command to do something is given, the things indispensable to the doing of that thing, are as much required as the thing itself; the inference then is this,—if alcohol be thus stimulative to evil, if the sinful propensities of human nature are excited by it, *touch not, taste not.*

I have extended my remarks on the subject of *spirit drinking* to a much greater length than I designed. I was anxious to impress upon your mind the reasons which induced me, in the

year 1834, to approve of the institution of the British and Foreign Temperance Society, and to adopt its declaration, "to abstain from distilled spirits, except for medicinal purposes : and to discountenance the causes and practice of intemperance." The society to which I have just referred, was formed almost immediately after the American Temperance Society was instituted, and copied its laws, I believe, almost exactly. They were found to work well in America, and it was supposed that the results would be equally extensive and beneficial in England. The decision to adopt the American model, I now think, was a great oversight. Both countries, indeed, were awfully addicted to intemperance ; but the means by which they practised this vice were greatly dissimilar. The national drink of America was ardent spirits—rum and brandy ; to these, as a beverage, the people were almost exclusively limited. In England, although ardent spirits are most extensively drunk in the metropolis and in the manufacturing towns, a very large proportion of the intemperance (it has been supposed two-thirds,) arises from the drinking of beer and cider. Now, abstinence from ardent spirits, which might meet the case of intemperance in America, and that, as it was soon evident, only partially, was of little or no perceptible benefit in England. The beer-drinker still got intoxicated, and in many instances the man pledged not to taste ardent spirits, gratified his intemperate propensities with malt-liquor or wine. I felt, and could not evade the force of the reply often made by the spirit-drinker, when urged to abstain, "Give me your wine, and I will part with the spirits." I think Archbishop Leighton says, somewhere, "The Christian cannot fight standing on a quagmire ;" implying, I suppose, how necessary it is for a man to be settled, and sincere, and consistent in his principles, when he resists the enemies of truth. It is just so on this subject ; the man addicted to the use of spirits, finds his apology, delusive as I grant you it is, in the knowledge of the fact that I might be drinking one or two glasses of wine daily ; and upon his mind all my persuasions to induce him to abstain, are neutralised by my example. There is no moral force in the arguments and entreaties employed to withdraw the intemperate from his vicious habits, unless they be accompanied by the *example* of entire abstinence from intoxicating drinks.

I was led from such thoughts and convictions as these, to inquire more minutely into the entire question of the nature and use of *all* intoxicating drinks. I was satisfied that distilled spirits were most injurious, *physically*, and speaking generally, *morally*.

I was not so sure that wine and malt-liquor, and other drinks capable of producing intoxication when taken to a certain extent, could, with any propriety, be placed in argument in the same category with ardent spirits. I will give you the result of my examination into this subject. All wines and fermented liquors contain a certain portion, more or less, of the intoxicating principle, which is designated alcohol; and which I have already said the distiller separates from the substances with which it was held in solution. Of this fact I was aware; but the impression on my mind was, that *because* the alcohol is held in such solution, its injurious properties are destroyed, or rather, are converted into something positively beneficial to the human constitution. I have found on inquiry that I was not singular in this opinion; that it is most tenaciously entertained by thousands of persons. I entreat you to weigh carefully and candidly the facts and reasons which changed my judgment. I have already quoted the reply given by Dr. Farre to the question, Whether water effects any change in the *principle* of distilled spirits? *The same answer is virtually true* as to alcohol when held in solution with vinous or malt liquor. Of this fact I was long sceptical, nor could I receive it fully, until in investigating the whole temperance question, I was led to examine very carefully the subjects of digestion, circulation, and stimulation. I need not tell you that there is a prodigious wear and tear constantly going on in the human body. Throughout every department of nature, waste is the invariable result of action. It is computed that a grown-up person loses from thirty to forty ounces of waste matter, exhaled by the skin and lungs alone, every twenty-four hours. The blood, which, in its transit through the different parts of the body, affords the supply of the secretions which perpetually take place, suffers a very considerable loss. The effects arising from this waste are obviated by the food received into the body, and which is converted into new and healthy blood. The least technical and most common-sense description of the process by which this change is effected, which I have met with, is in a pamphlet on the Physical Effects of Intemperance, by Charles Thornhill, Surgeon. "For this purpose (the formation of new and healthy blood) while retained in the stomach and upper bowels, the aliment taken in at each repast is found to undergo those singular changes that qualify it for being mixed with the circulating current. By being for a time subjected to the action of the gastric juice in the stomach, it is converted into a grey, uniform, cream-like mass, called *chyme*; and in this condition it is discharged from the organ

into the upper part of the intestinal canal. Here it is brought into contact with the bile flowing from the liver, which separates the nutritious particles from those that are useless: and a white fluid is ultimately formed, which has received from the ancients the name of *chyle*, from its supposed resemblance to milk. The *chyle* is speedily absorbed by the mouths of small vessels distributed in immense numbers upon the inner membrane of the bowel, and conveyed through their respective tubes into another channel of larger dimensions, which at length empties itself into a blood-vessel near the heart for the purpose of mixing with the sanguineous current, so that the nutritious cargo which is thus prepared and vitalized, increases the volume of fluid already contained in the circulating vessels. Whilst, therefore, the blood, from its continuous route through the system, and from the dispensation of its elements to different parts, suffers diminution and loss, it is through the intervention of the digestive apparatus that it is marvellously furnished with the means of deriving a fresh and rich supply."

I obtained this knowledge from my investigation, that only solid substances can be digested. The stomach cannot digest water or any other liquid, and therefore cannot turn it into blood. There is undoubtedly a certain limited quantity of what is nutritious to be found in wine and malt liquors. The water which they contain, and the alcohol in them, which is lighter than water, are taken up by the absorbents, and the very small quantity of solid matter which is left, is subjected to the process of digestion. Experiments the most minute and delicate have been tried upon wine and beer, to ascertain, in a given quantity, how much real nourishment is contained in them for the human body. I was perfectly astonished when I first saw the result stated. I wish you to feel satisfied in your mind that it is a physical truth that the *nourishment* in all drinks depends upon the *solid particles* suspended in the liquid. If you were to evaporate a glass of wine on a shallow plate, all the solid matter it contains would be left dry upon the plate; but only a portion of this residuum possesses nutritive properties, not so much as could be spread on the surface of a silver penny. The experiment on malt-liquor has often been exhibited in public. In a pint of beer or porter, there are fourteen ounces of water, nearly an ounce of alcohol, and *part of an ounce* of the extract of barley.

I have often been asked, "How do you account for the fact, of which," says the querist, "*I am certain*, that I feel better and stronger after having taken a glass of wine or beer?" My answer

is, " You have got *stimulation*, and that gives a temporary *feeling* of what you call strength, but which in reality has nothing in the world to do with it." There are no two things more essentially different than *stimulation* and *strength*; the former exhausts, the latter permanently enriches. The law of over-stimulation is, that the circulation of the blood falls off in a greater proportion than it has been forced; and then follows a collapsed or depressed state of feeling. This produces a sensation of pain, and a craving in the stomach for more; and hence arises the imminent danger of increasing the quantity of stimulant to meet the re-action, until habits of confirmed intemperance are riveted upon a man. It is quite evident to me that the popular use of the word *strong*, as applied to alcoholic drinks, has led many persons into serious error. What is more common than for some kind-hearted friend to entreat us, when weary with great exertion, to take wine or ale *to strengthen us*? The notion seems to be, that by swallowing what are called *strong drinks*, we are swallowing strength! This opinion prevails so generally, that I often hear it said, " Total abstinence may suit persons of strong constitutions, but it will never do for those that are weakly and delicate:" as though there was something essentially *strengthening* in alcoholic drinks! *We get strength by digesting nutritious food*, which is converted into blood, and which then supplies the waste and absorption of the body. It is of course most important that the process of digestion be as perfect and complete as possible. Independently of all reference to the arguments which the advocates of entire abstinence derive from the statements, and recorded in many instances long before the public mind was agitated on the subject, the opinions of the most eminent medical men in England, and on the continents of Europe and America, are unanimous, that the very best diluent which can be taken to assist in digestion, is *water*. They assert that pure water is agreeable to the different natures of all men; a fact which ought to silence the exquisitely absurd statement of some people, that " water never agreed with them in their lives!" It is found to have this advantage over all other liquids, that it is *a rule to itself*, and requires little caution in the use; since few will be tempted to drink more water than they need. Only a certain quantity of liquid is necessary in order to supply the loss which the fluids of the body are continually sustaining. If there be more than this quantity taken, it destroys the healthy operations of the system, and induces disease. It is a wise arrangement of Providence, that water, which is designed to quench our thirst, is destitute of any taste which can render it a tempt-

ation to be drunk excessively. Artificial liquors and all intoxicating drinks, create an unnatural thirst, and thus injure the constitution, not merely by the stimulating properties which belong to them, but also by the quantity taken to relieve this feeling being large and unnecessary. All drinks supply the wants of nature only by the quantity of elementary water which they contain. Pure alcohol would extinguish life, rather than satisfy thirst.

My attention was particularly directed to the subject of entire abstinence in the year 1839, by receiving a copy of the first volume of "Permanent Temperance Documents" of the American Temperance Society. I know not to whom I am personally indebted for the book, but the following record is inserted in it: "Presented by the Committee of the American Temperance Union, through the hands of Edward C. Delavan, Esq., of New York, United States, and committed (with other copies) to the distribution of the friends of temperance at Birmingham."

I am not acquainted with any volume which contains such a mass of information on the whole question of Temperance. It is the more valuable as detailing the working of the Society for a series of years on a large scale. The ninth Report, for the year 1836, particularly arrested my attention. The Committee of the American Temperance Society resolved to address a circular to a number of distinguished individuals who were known, or were supposed, to have *abstained* from the use of intoxicating liquor as a beverage, and ascertain from them the results of their experience on the subject. The questions to which they particularly solicited answers, were these:—1. What, in your case, has been the effect of abstinence from the use of intoxicating liquor *on health*? 2. What has been the effect on the capability of making great and continued efforts of body and mind? 3. What has been the effect on the feelings as to cheerfulness, &c.? Numerous communications were received in reply, and the extracts from them given in the Report are deeply interesting. The abstainers were in all the professions, and in almost every variety of trade. Some were living in the quietude of the country, and others in the excitement of large towns; but there was a remarkable agreement as to the real practical benefits derived from entire abstinence. You will believe me when I say that I read none of the communications with greater interest, than those which were supplied by ministers of the gospel. One of them writes: "During the last five years (a period of entire abstinence) I have made greater efforts of body and mind than I ever did before. Two of these five years I

was an agent of the American Sunday-school Union, in which I travelled about 5,000 miles, preaching and lecturing, upon an average, about once a day during the whole time, frequently riding in an open gig, in rain and snow storms, under burning suns and freezing cold. I can truly say that since I have got my system thoroughly into a *cold water habit*, I know not what fatigue is, whereas ten years ago, I used to get exhausted easily by mental and bodily efforts." The reply sent by the Rev. Leonard Woods, D.D., Professor of Christian Theology in the Theological Seminary, Andover, Massachusetts, deserves serious attention from *all students for the ministry*, and from Christian pastors:—"When I entered on the work of the ministry, thirty-eight years ago, it was the general and almost universal practice for ministers to make a frequent use of stimulating drinks, especially on the Sabbath. They considered this practice an important means of promoting their health, sustaining them under fatigue, and increasing the vigour of their constitutions. The state of things which I have referred to among men of my own profession, together with its manifest consequences, began early in my ministry to alarm my fears. I remember that at a particular period before the temperance reformation commenced, I was able to count up nearly forty ministers of the gospel—and none of them at a very great distance—who were either drunkards, or so far addicted to intemperate drinking, that their reputation and usefulness were greatly injured, if not utterly ruined. After I was admitted to the sacred office, I proceeded only a few years, according to common usage, before I began to abstain in part from distilled liquor. For though my health was almost uniformly good, I was sometimes troubled with the headache and other complaints, which I was led more and more distinctly to attribute to the use of such liquor. About thirty years ago, I gave it up wholly as a common drink, with very perceptible benefit to my health. Still I continued the occasional use of wine, especially after the labours of the Sabbath, thinking I must take something of the kind to prevent exhaustion and secure permanent health. But I soon found myself nearly as much mistaken in this as in the other case; for the effect of wine was in a great measure the same as that of distilled liquor. I gave up wine also, first in ordinary cases, then wholly. Both before and after this, I made long trial of the effect of other fermented liquor, as cider, ale, and porter. The lesson which my own experience and observation taught me, was the same here as in other cases, that *all such drinks are both unnecessary and hurtful*. I have now for a long time, and with a

most decided improvement of my health, acted on the principle of total abstinence from all intoxicating drinks." Such is the statement made by Dr. Leonard Woods. I beg your particular attention to some additional remarks contained in his reply. "I abstain from all intoxicating drinks, from a full conviction resulting from long experience and careful observation, that they are *unnecessary and hurtful*. But had I not so full a conviction of this, and did I think wine and other fermented liquors of some real benefit to me, I should still feel myself under obligations to abstain on other grounds." Having referred to fermented liquors proving a snare to multitudes, he adds, "Here I am brought under the obligation of the law of love ; and on this ground I should feel it to be a sacred duty to give up wine and other fermented liquors as a beverage, though it should involve some real loss of advantage to me. My obligation in this matter is set in a very strong light, by an appeal to the word of God. The sacred writers lay down many general precepts which evidently involve the principle I have now introduced. But there are two passages in particular from the epistles of St. Paul, which bear more directly upon the subject, and must be regarded as conclusive, if we are to be bound by his judgment and example. The first is, 1 Cor. viii. 13, ' Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.' The other is, Rom. xiv. 21, ' It is good neither to eat flesh nor to *drink wine*, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.' Such was the disposition of the apostle Paul, who possessed as much decision, firmness, and independence as any man living : such was the apostle's disposition to yield and make sacrifices for the good of others. And how can I refuse to copy such an example ? Finding that my use of wine or any other intoxicating drink would diminish my power to do good, and might occasion injury to some of my fellow-men, I should feel myself obliged, from regard to the authority of revelation and from love to God and man, to give it up, even though the use of it might be a pleasure to my taste and an advantage to my health. But as it is, I can practise that abstinence from stimulating drinks which the good of others demands, not only without loss in regard to health or pleasure, but with great gain as to both." The words with which he concludes are of thrilling interest. " This view of the subject which I have taken the liberty to express very plainly, is the result of much sober and careful observation on myself and others, as to the *moral influence* of the habit which was once so common. *It tends to inflame all*

that is depraved and earthly in a minister, and to extinguish all that is spiritual and holy. It is poison to the soul, as really as to the body. If, unhappily, I should find a minister of Christ keeping up the practice of using strong drink, I would earnestly beseech that dear brother, by the mercies of God, to lay aside a practice which thousands of ministers know assuredly to be a clog to devotion and a hinderance to growth in grace, to spiritual enjoyment, and to ministerial success." Truth is truth, on whichever side of the Atlantic it is uttered. Much of what is here *spoken out*, I have heard *whispered* as being the case in this country.

I think Dr. Leonard Woods puts the question on the right ground to Christian men. For my own part, I feel a moral obligation resting on me to follow the guidance of physical truth, to obey the decision of an enlightened conscience, and by abstaining from at least "the appearance of evil," to comply with the "royal law" of love. The decision to which I have arrived was not hastily adopted; but by God's help, it is formed unalterably. More than six months' trial of entire abstinence may not entitle me to boast; but they will, I think, justify me in giving a practical opinion on the subject. I am capable of a greater amount of mental and bodily labour, at less expenditure of strength, or with less consciousness of exhaustion, than I have felt under a different regimen. My general health for many years has certainly been good, but I can clearly perceive that the use of intoxicating liquors, although taken moderately, imparted a feverish tendency to my constitution, from which I am now quite free. Circumstances have required me, since I practised entire abstinence, to travel nearly *four thousand* miles in all weathers, by night and by day; and to engage frequently eight, ten, or eleven times in the week in public services, some of them very lengthy, and all of them very exciting. My nights have been spent without feverish restlessness, and my mornings were unaccompanied with dryness of mouth and general lassitude of feeling. The most quickened pulsation, consequent on exciting and prolonged services, has been diminished rapidly by rest—occasionally taken sitting, as recommended by Dr. J. P. Smith to ministers—"with my legs laid horizontally on a cushioned chair." The re-action or collapse has been speedily relieved by mild, simple, nourishing food. I do not know that I can describe my feelings better than by saying, that I almost constantly find it *a happiness to live*—an exuberance of vitality quickens every fibre, and makes mere living a source of joy. The intellectual and spiritual benefits of which I am conscious, are such

as have led me many times to praise God that my mind was ever directed to a *full* and *impartial examination* of this subject.

I have found the remark to be perfectly true, that "men will in these days allow you to hold what *opinions* you please, provided you will only *live* like them." I was utterly unconscious until I had passed the Rubicon of entire abstinence, how interwoven *drinking usages* are with the entire framework of civil society in this country. The step I have taken involves much more than merely declining to drink intoxicating liquors; it places a man in an antagonist position to what are regarded as the evidences of courtesy and the claims or duties of hospitality. Much moral courage is needed by every one who adopts the same resolution: but "thrice is he armed who has his quarrel just." Lord Bacon has remarked—"Custom is the chief magistrate of man's life; men should therefore endeavour by all means to obtain good customs." The habits of society as now constituted, are favorable to the perpetuation of a race of intemperate men. I know not how any one can adopt the strong views on the subject of total abstinence which I have avowed, without resolving to employ the measure of influence which God has given him, to introduce better, because safer and more Christian usages, than those which are now practised.

I designed from the commencement of this letter to avail myself of the opportunity which it would afford, to show you what answers I am prepared to give to certain objections which are entertained against the views I support. I am sure that most who argue with me against the *precise method* which I think alone effectual to destroy intemperance from the land, are as inimical to that vice as I am: they differ with me as to the *means*, not the *object*. Much of their opposition has been respectfully and conscientiously advanced, and demands a patient examination and a candid reply.

I deplore most deeply what I find has excited considerable prejudice against the cause of abstinence itself—that many unauthorised and utterly unqualified persons, in their public addresses, have manifested much coarseness, vulgarity, censoriousness, and uncharitableness. I make no apologies for them; but I think some mitigating circumstances may be stated to extenuate their conduct. Many of them have just escaped from the demon of intemperance, and have scarcely recovered their right minds. Others, from want of early instruction and from the influence of example, have always adopted a coarse and vulgar phrasology and manner, which, however offensive to a more refined taste, in all probability produces a more powerful effect on *their peers*

than would a more polished style and more elegant illustrations and more logical arguments. Mr. Wesley replied to the critics of his day who objected to the comparative ignorance and rudeness of some of the first lay preachers—" *The sons of Abraham were silent, and the stones of the wall cried out.*" It is very similarly the case in the present instance ; the great temperance reformation began with *the least*, and it is working its way up to *the greatest*. Many talented advocates are now to be found, whose urbanity of manners, purity of language, acuteness of intellect, and conclusiveness of reasoning, would render them ornaments of any cause to which they allied themselves. When the irritation of mind occasioned by the folly and slanders of some public speakers has subsided, you will see that the justice and truth of a cause are utterly independent of such contingencies ; and will, I trust, *weigh the facts and arguments* adduced, rather than the *solecisms* in grammar, and *vulgarities* in language and illustrations, by which your more correct taste has been offended.

One of the strangest objections to total abstinence which I have heard advanced, is, that it is *an abridgment of Christian liberty*. I have known a glass of wine to be drank when no inclination suggested the desire, simply, as it was said, *to assert Christian liberty*. The feeling which dictates such opposition must be greatly outraged by the assertion of St. Paul—"All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient ; all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." And again—"All things are lawful for me, *but all things are not expedient* : all things are lawful for me, *but all things edify not.*" The apostle clearly supposes that a case might arise in which it would be his *duty*, for the sake of the edification of others, voluntarily to abridge himself of the use of some meats and drinks, which otherwise he might have partaken of innocently. He suggests, I think, as an evil, "being brought under the power" of what was lawful in itself. Dr. Clarke says, "A man is *brought under the power of any thing* which he cannot give up. He is the *slave* of that thing, whatsoever it be, which he cannot relinquish ; and then, to him it is sin."

Admitting, for the sake of argument (what *in my own case* I dare not concede) that alcoholic drinks *may innocently* be taken as a beverage, I ask, have not the circumstances arisen in which "the law of love" demands from all believers, and especially from those whose influence is the greatest, a sacrifice by total abstinence of what, considered abstractedly, might be lawful ?

Our nation has arrived at a crisis in the excessive use of intoxicating liquors, unknown in former times. By far the greater number of cases of delinquency among ministers themselves and private members of Christian churches, have their origin from intoxicating drinks.

It is high time for some decisive and effectual means to be employed against this mighty evil. *Such may be found*, in the simple principle of total abstinence from all that can intoxicate. I commend to those who are so jealous of any yoke being placed on them, the sentiment contained in St. Paul's declaration, to some more knowing brother than the rest, in his day, who was fearful of an abridgment of his liberty,—“Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died.” All these statements about Christian liberty are mere sophisms. Man exists *relatively* as well as *individually*, and from that fact arises the necessity and duty of giving up, occasionally, some apparent rights. Whoever lives in a civilized community, resigns a portion of what might abstractedly be considered his liberty; but then the individual and general advantages consequent upon this resignation, more than compensate for the sacrifice. It is thus, on Christian principles, “no man liveth to himself.” I wish I could convince those who boastingly assert their Christian liberty in taking alcoholic drinks, that there is such a thing as *foolhardiness*, which is sometimes mistaken for courage; and that men, not less heroic in their spirit than they, have thought it no evidence of feebleness of mind, nor a compromise of principle, to submit to Christian expediency. Mr. Wesley has some remarks in his sermon “on Public Diversions,” which will confirm the sentiments I have just expressed. “You see the wine when it sparkles in the cup, and are going to drink of it. *I tell you there is poison in it!* and therefore beg you to throw it away. You answer, ‘the wine is harmless in itself.’ Perhaps it is so; but still *if it be mixed with what is not harmless*, no one in his senses, if he knows it at least, unless he could separate the good from the bad, will once think of drinking it. If you add, “*It is not poison to me, though it be to others;*” then I say, “*Throw it away for thy brother's sake, lest thou embolden him to drink also.*” Why should thy strength occasion thy weak brother to perish, for whom Christ died?” To the words which I have placed in *italics*, I beg your particular attention. “Take heed lest this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak.”

I find that many conscientious persons look upon the question of total abstinence with some suspicion, because it appears

to be a *novelty* among the followers of Christ. I have been asked, with a triumphant air, "Are we wiser or holier than our Christian ancestors, who never thought of adopting any such means to stem the torrent of intemperance, which rolled on even in their days?" The names of men most eminent for personal piety and zeal for the glory of God, "whose praise is in all the churches," have been singled out, and the *argumentum ad verecundiam* has been pressed upon us, "Do you think *they* were *wrong*, and that *you* are *right*? that *they* omitted any thing necessary for God's glory, and that *you* are the happy discoverers of the deficiency in the nineteenth century?" As a general and prefatory remark, I would say, that, whilst I thank God for the piety, and zeal, and benevolence of our Christian forefathers, I do not think that we are bound, either by principles of reason or religion, *so precisely* to imitate their example, as not to move beyond the limits by which they were circumscribed. There is "a fulness of time" for accomplishing the great designs of Jehovah. I doubt not that our predecessors acted according to the light they possessed, and employed what they deemed the best means to extend the Redeemer's kingdom; but to argue that *we* are to measure our *present* duties, or to determine what is *now* expedient to be done, by the conduct of believers in past periods, is to attempt to stop the Christian Church in the progress which she is so gloriously making in the path of holy enterprise. You will anticipate my reference to the comparatively recent origin of the mighty machinery now employed by God's children to benefit their fellow-creatures, and to convert the world. Those gigantic institutions, the Bible, the Missionary, and the Tract Societies; Sunday-schools, and the societies for the abolition of the Slave-trade, and of slavery, all have had their origin within a century. Each in its day was a *novelty*,—startling some persons, and positively alarming others. It seems to be consistent with the designs of the Almighty himself, that man should be continually advancing towards higher degrees of intellectual and moral excellence; and thus to become capable of more extensive usefulness. It is not quite true that total abstinence from intoxicating liquors was unthought of by many of the holy men of a former age. Several of them practised it rigidly, and some recommended it earnestly. I need not remind you, as a Wesleyan, what the rules of our Society state upon this subject. In the Minutes of Conference for 1744, Mr. Wesley, in referring to the prudential means which a believer may use to increase his personal piety and usefulness, asks, among many

other questions, "Do you use only that *kind* and that *degree* of drink which is *best* both for body and soul?" And what that "drink" was, in his judgment, may be gathered from the next inquiry, "Do you drink *water*? Why not? Did you ever? Why did you leave it off? If not for health, when will you begin again? To-day?"

There is a class of persons in civil and religious societies who uniformly admire and support *half-measures* on all subjects. They are perfectly enamoured of "the golden mediocrity," and nothing alarms them so much as the danger people are in of running into extremes! Their significant and uniform reply to the most cogent arguments and overwhelming facts, is a mere repetition of what Goldsmith puts into the mouth of one of the characters in his "Vicar of Wakefield;" "much may be said on both sides." This sagacious answer *satisfies them* that the supporters of total abstinence *must* be in the wrong, *because* they take an extreme. I have already protested against the violent and unguarded manner in which some persons have spoken on this subject. As to the question itself, with the views which I entertain of the positive and necessary tendency of alcoholic drinks, physically and morally,—*moderation*, "the golden mean," appears to me unjustifiable. I object to the term altogether because it begs the question, that there is some real and essential good in alcoholic drinks; and that only an excessive use of them is to be deprecated, just as we commonly say, "fire is a good servant, but a very bad master." I state my conviction that as a beverage they are unnecessary and injurious. Moderation in using them, that is, taking a small quantity, certainly is not so great an evil as drinking them excessively; but then it remains in the positive degree of *bad*, though it escapes the superlative, *worst*. Moderation in what is evil, really does not deserve to be exalted into a virtue.

As a *remedy* for intemperance, entire abstinence is necessarily efficacious, and as a *preventive* it is equally certain. The medium way—the half-measure, leaves a man exposed to the *possibility* of ultimate intemperance; and at the same time introduces into his system so much of what is positively injurious, as to impair, more or less, the most important functions of life, and induce a state of morbid predisposition, which renders him liable to disease from very slight causes. I will add, that his moderation renders him utterly impotent in reclaiming or reproving the intemperate. The very indefinite standard of "taking only what will do a man good," leaves the question open from a single glass of wine, which might satisfy you, to the bottle or two

which some one else has found out to be the *exact quantity* which "does him good." Entire abstinence frees its supporter from the difficulties which encumber every other plan. He does not attempt to settle the very involved question as to what constitutes *temperate* drinking, and which must vary according to the difference of age, constitution, and sex ; but laying down one plain, simple, comprehensible rule, not to drink any thing which can intoxicate, he walks by it.

I have found considerable sensitiveness manifested by many excellent people, lest, in supporting the doctrine of entire abstinence from alcoholic drinks, and in stating the signal benefits which thousands have received from it, we should be found *reaching another gospel*, or detracting, in the slightest degree, from the efficacy of Divine grace to save a man from sin, and to prepare him for heaven. I respect such jealousy for God's glory so much, not to reply to the objection with deep seriousness. *We do not substitute* abstinence from intoxicating drinks for "a meetness for the inheritance of the saints:" nor imagine that the practice of the virtue of temperance, is a warrant for omitting to seek for, and to exhibit the graces of faith and love. I will tell you, candidly, my thoughts on the subject. Intemperance in all its degrees is a physical evil ; the mind uniformly sympathizes with the body, and in this instance *suffers* with it. The intellect is impaired, and the moral feelings are blunted in many persons by the constant use of alcoholic drinks. Thousands of such persons sit unaffected under the most faithful and heart-reaching ministry. The truth is, intoxicating drinks excite all that is animal in the human constitution, and in that proportion weaken the force of moral principles and feelings. The introduction of ardent spirits among the natives of the South Sea Islands, was found immediately to put a stop to the beneficial preaching of the gospel. Men who previously had melted into tears when God's love in the gift of his Son was declared, became, under alcoholic stimulant, first indifferent to such subjects, and then hostile to their Christian brethren and pastors. The lamented Missionary Williams, referring to the formation of Temperance Societies in the South Sea Islands, wrote thus :—"The *Missionaries* began with *themselves*, and although some of them are old and infirm, and have been in the habit of using spirits many years, they most cheerfully made the sacrifice which the state of our churches, and the Islanders generally, demanded." The result has been, the conversion of many hundreds who would not probably, by any other means, have been brought to hear the gospel ; and the stability of the members of the

newly formed churches, has been greatly increased. The admirable code of laws recently promulgated in the Friendly Islands by King George, of Vavou, will illustrate the correctness of my opinion on this subject. In the first class of crimes prohibited and in which the most horrible sins are included, the retailing of spirits finds a place. Under the eighth regulation this enactment is published :—"In case of a person retailing ardent spirits he shall pay a fine to the King of twenty-five dollars, and be liable to have the spirits taken from him." The King we know to be a godly man, and such a law would never have emanated from him, had he not been conscious of the great impediment which alcoholic drinks placed in the way of the religious and civil welfare of his people. Entire abstinence is a means to an end; we never imagine that a man is saved from the Divine wrath denounced against sinners, because of his abandonment of alcoholic drink. But of this we are certain, that when we have instructed a man to live, in the fullest sense of the word physically, *soberly*, we have placed him in circumstances the most favorable for the operation of truth on his mind, and of grace on his heart. And numerous facts confirm the soundness of this view. It is not necessary that a man should live in habits of positive intoxication in order to suffer mentally and morally from alcoholic drinks. The regular daily use of them beyond the most limited extent, produces that effect; they "pervert the feelings." No religious impressions on the man's mind are lasting; no spiritual convictions are cherished, no purposes are fulfilled. I could point you to very many proofs of this fact, that entire abstinence from all that can intoxicate, has positively been connected with a rapid elevation of the intellect; and what is of far higher importance, it has predisposed the parties seriously to examine God's commandments, and to submit to his authority.

The objection on which I find many of my Christian friends lay the greatest stress, and by which they feel warranted in their own minds to oppose the temperance reformation as founded on entire abstinence, is, that *no Scriptural command* can be adduced requiring us to abstain from intoxicating drinks; and that every *precedent* or *authority* for using them, may be found in God's Holy Word. I submit to your impartial consideration the following reply, by which my own mind is satisfied that such an objection, though I believe in many instances most conscientiously urged, has in reality no weight. The former part of it involves, as you cannot fail to perceive, a complete fallacy, that in all cases of Christian duty are supported by separate and distinct

commands; and that, *therefore*, when Scripture is silent, we have no right to engage in any enterprise of piety or charity. A serious, devout, and intelligent reader of the Bible must observe that the preceptive portions of divine law are given in general principles. This is more particularly the case in the New Testament, which exhibits the higher economy of the gospel. This dispensation is pre-eminently a noble and generous system of God's government, in which the detail of man's obedience to God, is not guarded by specific commands, but left to be under the direction of that one lofty principle, which operates on the entire nature of the "new creature," *love to God and love to man*. This general principle of Christian morality supports the conduct which I am defending and recommending. I am to "love God with *all my heart, and mind, and soul, and strength*;" the unre-served surrender of my faculties in their highest development is thus due to God. Now, upon the principles which I lay down, of the effect of intoxicating liquor upon man, physically, mentally, and morally, I can only love God with all the vigour of my intellect, and all the spirituality of my soul, as I am utterly unoperated upon by alcoholic stimulus. I was much surprised to find these views which I had taken separately and independently, confirmed by the honorable Judge Hall, of Wilmington, Delaware, United States, in almost the same phraseology. "In March, 1827," says he, "I first made a profession of religion. I was then brought to contemplate, in juster views than I had ever taken, the worship of God. I saw something of the doctrine, 'God is Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.' This worship must be the sober, pure, genuine work of the heart, in full self-possession. It is the duty of every one, *at all times*, to be in a suitable state to render this worship; not to be in such a state, if proceeding from our own act, is an ungrateful and inexcusable sin. A mind excited by artificial stimulus is not in this state. Its offering would be strange indeed. I do not mean that *any* use of intoxicating liquor would produce the evil here apprehended; but for security against producing it, the use must be so scrupulously and carefully limited, while the tendency to transgress this limit, or indeed not to fix it first within the safe bound, is so great, that no one without urgent cause should encounter the hazard of offending. This was among the considerations influencing my determination to abstain entirely."

That there are distinct Scriptural precepts against drunkenness, does not admit of doubt or disputation. It is equally certain that some of the most eminent characters referred to in

Scripture, drank only water. I remind you of Samson, Daniel and his companions, the Rechabites, and John the Baptist. The most judicious critics give it as their judgment that the statement in Acts xviii. 18, of Paul "having a vow," refers to the obligation under which he had laid himself by the vow of a Nazarite, to abstain totally from wine and strong drink. The admiration which Timothy entertained for Paul, seems to have induced him to copy the apostle's example most rigidly. His "many infirmities," however, led St. Paul to prescribe for him a *medicine*, "a little wine."

The question of the *precedents* to be found in Scripture for using alcoholic drinks, is without doubt a delicate and difficult one. It is not easy to ascertain the precise nature of the different wines spoken of in the sacred volume. I commend to your serious perusal, "An Essay upon the wines and strong drinks of the ancient Hebrews, by the Rev. Moses Stuart, M.A. reprinted from the American edition, with a Preface, by Dr. J. Pye Smith." I cannot, within the limits of a letter give you the facts and reasons which have led me to this opinion; but after some examination, I do most sincerely adopt the conclusion on this subject, given by the talented author of "The Curse of Britain." "*Water* was the *common drink* of the Jews: they were permitted to use the juice of the grape as far as it might really contribute to health and rational enjoyment; the practice of drinking even the purest wine for mere self-indulgence, or for the gratification of an intemperate appetite, although it might not produce actual drunkenness, has been plainly denounced by their holy and inspired prophets; and that *strong drinks*, or such as had a strong tendency to produce inebriation, were never, in any way, sanctioned as common beverages." I wonder that it does not occur to many persons who urge the argument from precedent very earnestly, that after all it is not an argument of analogy. Distilled spirits are of course excluded from any presumed support, which Scripture usages supply for using alcoholic drinks. Modern wines drunk in this country are almost wholly of a different character from those of Palestine. *Alcohol* is *mixed* with them in order to keep them from turning sour and to suit the taste of the consumers. The union of the alcohol which is in them as the result of fermentation, with the quantity of distilled spirit added by the vendors for the purpose I have just stated, gives us a *most powerful stimulant* under the name of wine. One of the most celebrated practical chemists in Europe, Mr. Brande, has shown, by an analysis of wines, that *Madeira* and *Port* wines as ordinarily sold, contain nearly o-

fourth part of alcohol: and that *Sherry, Lisbon, and Malaga* wines approach nearly to the same standard. *Brandy, Rum, Whiskey, and Gin* are more than one-half alcohol by measurement. It follows, therefore, that a man in drinking a full bottle of the strongest wines, uses nearly as much alcohol as is contained in a pint of brandy; or, what is equivalent to a pint of ordinary rum! The intoxicating effect is certainly not exactly in this proportion, but the poisonous principle works through the system, as though only spirit diluted with water had been drunk. The conclusion then, to which some have arrived with so much self-satisfaction, that *because* the Jews drank the light simple wines of Palestine without any condemnation from God, we are *therefore* justified in drinking the artificial and strongly alcoholic liquors used in this country, is certainly a *non sequitur*.

I will tell you candidly that I believe the most important and beneficial results would follow from a general and entire disuse of alcoholic drinks. The standard of *individual piety* would rise. Thousands of professors of religion can testify that they never walked so closely with God as since they have put away intoxicating drinks. The *real* state of a man's religious experience can be decided upon most accurately by himself, when no alcoholic stimulus is at work in his constitution to induce an excitement which may be mistaken for a work of grace.* The *self-denial* which is involved in it by those who, unconvinced as I am, of their positively poisonous nature, yet abstain under the authority of the law of love to our neighbour, will prove eminently the means of increasing their godliness. This subject comes clearly under the class of arguments employed by Mr. Wesley in his admirable sermon on "The more excellent way." Many have found as an immediate result of renouncing all that can intoxicate, that an earthliness of soul seemed to be expelled; and they began with earnestness to aspire after the heights and depths of holiness, after the entire image of God. *They* "fight

* In a valuable sermon on "Temperance in Food," inserted in the Wesleyan Magazine for September 1836, there are some remarks which confirm my convictions on this subject—"The pious man who indulges his appetite beyond the demands of unsophisticated nature, cannot escape those morbid and irregular actions of mind which now lift the feelings into the region of enthusiasm, and now sink them into the abyss of despondency. So irregular, indeed, will be the emotions of such a man, that he can never judge correctly of their nature, nor determine whether they result from the excitement of the animal constitution or from the operations of grace and truth. *Hope, therefore, will be feeble and unsteady; and his whole religious character will partake of the morbid irregularity of the physical powers, and want that healthful vigour and steady consistency which give to Christian example its greatest force.*"

the good fight of faith" most successfully, who have learned to "endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ."

I firmly believe that in many instances the social intercourse of believers would be greatly benefited by an adoption of the measure which I suggest. How many have bewailed, when reviewing such seasons, the frivolity and worldliness of conversation, and the little prominence which has been given to Divine and saving truths! On this subject I write with a bitterness of self-accusation, and a sincerity of sorrow, which I cannot easily describe. Is not the complaint almost universal, "How little spirituality is witnessed in the social parties of professing Christians in the present day?" In attempting to account for what, I grieve to say, I believe to be too true, I will pass over many things which contribute their quota to the aggregate evil, and fix my attention on one most prominent cause, the free distribution and use of alcoholic drinks. I do not mean to say that on such occasions any one takes such a quantity of them as to produce inebriation; or that any one exceeds that measure which is popularly termed *moderate*, or very *moderate*; and yet the evil of which we all complain is connected with what is drunk. Supposing that any one present, eminently godly, through ignorance, or the force of example, or by yielding to most pressing invitations, drinks three or four glasses of the brandied wines every where in use; the effect is, by the stimulus supplied to what is merely animal in human nature, to call forth a class of thoughts which do not minister to spirituality of mind, and which, therefore, suggest nothing religiously profitable for conversation. But suppose the person be a professor *only*, having no saving grace in his soul, then does the alcoholic drink stimulate a depraved nature, and frothy, vain, and worldly conversation is almost exclusively heard. Happy will the day be when in the friendly parties of the followers of Jesus Christ, nothing that can intoxicate is introduced! It is possible that under such circumstances there may be, occasionally, less brilliancy of wit displayed, and less quickness of repartee heard,—there may not be so many stories pathetically or humorously related, and the hour of breaking up the party may be somewhat earlier. But then there will be cheerfulness without levity, and perfect sobriety of mind manifested, in every reply given to questions of deep and eternal interest proposed for conversation. Friendly parties will then constitute "the communion of saints," and the recollection of them will be fragrant long after death has removed one and another of the social circle from us.

I anticipate very extensive *revivals* of religion in connexion

with the advance of abstinence principles and practice. This has been very signally the case in America. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian churches in the United States—a large and respectable body composed of about two thousand ministers—have published this statement as their deliberate judgment: “It is now a well-established fact, that the common use of strong drink, *however moderate*, has been a fatal soul-destroying barrier against the influence of the Gospel. Consequently, wherever total abstinence is practised, a powerful instrument of resisting the Holy Ghost is removed, and a new avenue of access to the hearts of men opened to the power of truth. Thus in numerous instances, and in various places during the past year, the Temperance reformation has been a harbinger preparing the way of the Lord: and the banishment of that *liquid poison* which kills both soul and body, has made way for the immediate entrance of the Spirit and the word—the glorious train of the Redeemer.” A very interesting account of the revival of religion which has lately taken place in Kilsyth, in Scotland, was given to the Presbytery of Glasgow, by the Rev. Mr. Burns, the minister of the parish. Among other important statements of what was auxiliary to the work of God, he adds—“The revival was considerably helped by the introduction of the temperance principle into the parish.” The increase of members of society in the Cornish district, among the Wesleyans, during the past year, was *four thousand seven hundred and thirty*. I have made careful inquiry from those competent to form a judgment, and the result is, a firm conviction in my mind of the fact, that *many hundreds of the new converts* have been led to serve God, from an abandonment of alcoholic drinks. I augur well for the stability of those who have joined the church of Christ, from the circumstance that one of the most powerful means of drawing men into sin is abandoned by them. Satan has never employed any agency with such success as intoxicating liquor, for the purpose of enticing professors of religion from the paths of holy consistency. The converts in Cornwall have in many instances put away “the accursed thing;” and if my voice could be heard by all of them, I would say—“in your resolution to abstain, be faithful unto death.” Are we not *praying* with apparent earnestness in all our churches for revivals of religion? And how seldom do we witness them? “Is there not a cause?” Now if it be a fact, that a general abandonment of intoxicating liquors by members of Christian churches has led to a *deepening* and extending of the work of God in them: if this result have taken place, not occasionally and incidentally, but as it appears, almost

uniformly, as though the law of cause and effect were in operation—then does it become an inquiry of momentous importance whether our present habits of living may not be positively hindering the progress of the Redeemer's kingdom.

As a question of *economy*, no one can doubt the beneficial result of total abstinence. The amount expended in intoxicating drinks in this country is almost incredible. The most accurate calculation fixes it at *fifty millions of pounds sterling* annually, a sum considerably more than the entire export trade of the united kingdom realizes. I have reiterated my conviction, that all such drinks are *unnecessary* and *injurious*: the money spent to obtain them is worse than wasted. Few have calculated thoughtfully their personal and domestic expenses for intoxicating drinks. The average is a low one, to say that the annual outlay in purchasing them is *ten per cent.* upon the whole household expenses. How many mechanics expend five shillings, or more, weekly upon the drink which they themselves consume? I was struck with the practical good sense of an intelligent man in this rank of life, who, telling me lately of the benefits which he and his family derived from total abstinence, added, "It enables us, without our feeling it any sacrifice, to contribute *weekly* and *quarterly* to the support of the ministry under which we sit; *and to pay for sittings in the house of God.*" I admired the well-principled independence of the man, not to occupy the forms for the poor, when the means acquired so easily enabled him to sit with his wife and children comfortably in a rented pew. And what *wonderful* self-denial would accomplish all these results? Will you credit it—that the money expended in purchasing a single quart of strong ale every week, would defray the whole of *these* expenses!

The calls upon the Christian church for increased liberality are loud and frequent. All the leading Missionary Institutions are imploring the people of God to enrich the Lord's treasury. Our own Missionary Society, in the spirit of obedient faith to the will of God, plainly evidenced by extraordinary openings and most importunate requests, has exceeded its income by *twenty thousand pounds*. An earnest appeal for enlarged contributions is made in the Missionary Notice for December last, connected with the statement—and the names of the places are given—that nearly *sixty* applications recently made, principally from the heathen world, for additional Missionaries, have been refused because no funds exist for such an enlargement. Now all God's actings are in harmony: he does not call the church to do what she is unable to accomplish. There are ample means, so far as

money is concerned, for greatly enlarging the sphere of missionary enterprise. We only want the disposition to abandon useless expenditure, and to consecrate the amount saved to God. Without denying ourselves any thing really essential to health or comfort or happiness, contributing *only a small portion* of what would be saved by entire abstinence from alcoholic drinks—we, as a body, might in one year, with the greatest ease, *double the amount* even of the long wished for one hundred thousand pounds. We are essentially a missionary people—God has raised us up to take an important part in the conversion of the world. If we refuse to obey the calls which he gives us to “go up and possess the land”—if by living in habits of self-indulgence we limit our means of benevolence—if we shrink back from the self-denial necessary for greatly enlarged contributions—then I fear God will abandon us at home, and *Iehabod* will be written upon us. Something is necessary to be done to prevent us from becoming worldly in our spirit and habits. When “Jeshurun waxed fat,” he “kicked.” We maintained an elevated piety and a distinguished liberality whilst we were, as a body, poor in circumstances, and comparatively unknown. Our position is now greatly altered, and the danger which threatens us is imminent. There is, however, a way of escape and safety. Let us be instant in prayer, and increasingly attentive to the social means of grace. Let us avoid all display and ostentation in our persons, houses, entertainments, and contributions. Let us fully purge ourselves from “the pomps and vanities of this wicked world,” and be willing to be again neglected and despised. Let us take *a decided and honest stand* on the question of abstinence from alcoholic drinks. To say that *we are* a Temperance Society, because in our general rules for admission into church membership we find the prohibition, “*not to buy or sell spirituous liquors, nor to drink them except in cases of extreme necessity* ;” and in the directions to the Band Societies, given by Mr. Wesley in 1744, “to taste *no spirituous liquor*, unless prescribed by a physician”—is only to condemn ourselves most grievously. *That we ought to be one* practically and essentially, is the only honest interpretation of our own rules. Why should we not, then, go back to first principles? * I have a strong persuasion,

* You will find some most excellent remarks on the *duty* of the Wesleyans in reference to the general question of abstinence, in the December Wesleyan Magazine for 1836, under the article “Old Methodism.” Referring to the rule of not buying, selling, or drinking spirituous liquors, the writer says—“Though the Wesleyans of the present day are a temperate people, we cannot affirm that the rule in question is *either generally enforced or generally kept in its*

that if a movement such as the temperance reformation had taken place in the lifetime of Mr. Wesley, his sagacious mind would have seen at once how contributory it might be made to the great object for which he lived—the glory of God in the salvation of souls. It is for us who witness it to seize it for that noble purpose. Should we do so, the results will be most cheering and extensive. The lists of backsliders will be greatly diminished in number—the piety of those who remain faithful will become purer and more elevated—stumbling-blocks will be removed out of the way—larger numbers of young men from our Sunday-schools will connect themselves with us in church fellowship—and all financial difficulties will be removed.

Such is the constitution of our nature, that no man can acquire one good habit without that predisposing and capacitating him to form others. The frequent opportunities to oppose the custom of the world as to the use of alcoholic drinks, afforded to every one who abstains, will have a tendency to produce a tone of greater firmness and decision, when worldly temptations assume some other form of danger. The victory obtained, in many instances, over long cherished habits, will inspirit a man for

literal and obvious meaning. A liberal but unauthorized interpretation has been put upon it, which has had the effect of making it, with many, a dead letter. This is ground of regret; but it affords us pleasure to add, that the number of those who act according to *its strictest, and, as we think, true import*, is rapidly on the increase; and we think that the day is not distant when we shall be of one mind, and shall have one way in this matter." After a very powerful description of the evils of intemperance, the writer adds—"A radical and universal reform here would advantage the nation in all its interests and through all its borders. Methodism in connexion with other systems and societies, has contributed to the commencement of this reform; *but its capabilities for carrying the reformation to a successful termination are greater than its greatest friends imagine; and were its energies and various agencies fairly enlisted in the service, the cause of temperance would receive an impetus such as it has never received, and such as no other community could have imparted.* In conclusion, we desire to see Methodism more fully identified with the cause of Temperance, *on account of the intimate connexion which exists between that cause and the revival of pure and undefiled religion.* Could we only induce ministers and church officers to abstain from the pestiferous liquid, and in their respective spheres frown upon *its use in any form*, then *might we hope* for 'times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.'" To the sentences which I have made emphatic by italics, I earnestly call your attention. Every word in them I believe to be true; but then I tremble to think of the awful responsibility connected with such a providential position of influence, assigned to us for the benefit of the church and the world. Ought we not at once to assume it, and as the writer of the above article himself says—"redeem the connexion from the charge of inconsistency, and set an example to the Church in all its sections, of a great Christian community uniting to deny themselves of a popular indulgence."

fresh achievements. The dominion of appetite will be overthrown; and the subjugation to the pleasures of mere sense, by which every thing in man that is intellectual and moral is enfeebled, will be exchanged for spiritual supremacy and holy enjoyments.

May I entreat you, my dear friend, to examine the contents of this letter seriously and prayerfully. I know that you will not reject the whole question scornfully or with utter indifference, as is done too frequently. O how many of the dearest interests of life are involved in this subject! There is scarcely a family circle in which *one* intemperate member may not be found. Much ingenuity, I know, is often practised to keep the painful secret from public notice; but how many bitter scalding tears are shed in private on account of it! It is not for me to reveal what has been confided to the honour of a Christian minister, or I could assure you that many husbands and wives, and parents, and children, and sisters, are "weeping in secret places" because of the *growing habits* of intemperance which they mark in their nearest and best beloved relatives. In total abstinence you have the means of *prevention* and *recovery* combined.

I urge you most affectionately to take a decided part on this question. Bear your silent but powerful protest against the evils to which intoxicating drinks, in so many instances, lead, *by wholly abstaining from them*. If I am right in my judgment on this subject generally, deep responsibility is attached to all, who, knowing what is "the more excellent way," refuse to walk in it. Can *you* be satisfied in your own conscience without at least making the experiment "whether these things be so or not?" Your moral courage, surely, is strong enough to bear a little good tempered raillery, or even a portion of ill tempered and malevolent sarcasm, for a short time. The approbation of God and your own conscience—the increase of your personal piety and mental vigour—the salutary influence which you will exert over others, and the souls which you may instrumentally save from death,—will prove to you an ample compensation.

I remain, my dear Sir,

Yours very faithfully,

GEORGE BROWNE MACDONALD.

P.S. I have read with much pleasure the following works, bearing more or less directly on the subject of this letter, and have availed myself of several valuable facts and sentiments, which

you will find in them :—The Parliamentary Evidence on Drunkenness ; Anti-Bacchus ; Baker's Curse of Great Britain ; The Pastor's Pledge ; Thornhill's Physical Effects of Intemperance ; Dunlop on the Compulsory Drinking Usages of Great Britain ; The American Permanent Temperance Documents ; Watts's Lecture on the Nature and Government of the Health ; Curtis on Health ; Beaumont on the Nature and Properties of Alcoholic Drinks, &c. &c. I take this opportunity to acknowledge my obligation to the Conductors of the British Temperance Advocate and Journal, for sending me, *gratuitously*, copies of their increasingly valuable periodical. Many articles in their Journal are of sterling worth, and I have obtained much information from them. The alterations and improvements in the mode of conducting that Journal, commencing with the year 1841, will, I have no doubt, greatly increase the value of the work, and I hope also the number of *paying* readers.

